



## TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING FOR CADETS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at finding the strategies used in teaching speaking and the problems faced by the teacher during a teaching process at *BP2IP Malahayati Aceh*. It also investigated the students' responses toward the teachers' strategies by involving two English teachers and two classes of 58 students. To gain the needed data, the writers used classroom observation, interview and questionnaire as research instruments. Classroom observation and interview were used to identify the teachers' challenges and also strategies in teaching speaking, and questionnaire was utilized to collect the data about students' responses towards the strategies. The results showed that the teachers used five strategies in teaching speaking for cadets in *BP2IP Malahayati Aceh*, namely: role play, drilling, games, describing picture, and also discussion group. Moreover, three common obstacles were found during teaching process; limited vocabulary, improper pronunciation, and less confident of the students. This study also showed that students' responses towards the strategies were positive.

**Keywords:** *teaching strategies, speaking, cadet.*

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of English cannot be denied in this globalization era. It is used as a means in international communication. The BP2IP (*Balai Pelatihan dan Pendidikan Ilmu Pelayaran*) Malahayati Aceh which trains the students to be international seafarers also focuses on improvement of English ability for their cadets (maritime students). A

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seafarer should be able to communicate in international language because they will meet and work with people around the world. Lloyd (2013) states that English is the language of seafarers and its standardization is to simplify the understanding. Moreover, English can save seafarers' life from some accidents on the board. Therefore, it is hoped that all the cadets practice speaking English daily so that they can master English. Furthermore, Rashed and Kamal (2010) contend that seafarers' ability to communicate with an acceptable standard of English is essential. Consequently, the improvement of language skill is important for the cadets so that they can communicate effectively. It can be inferred that speaking skill is an essential skill to be taught for the cadets.

Speaking is one of the subjects where the students are expected to be able to use language (English) in their daily communication. The aim of teaching speaking is to provide students with an ability to express themselves in the target language to cope with basic interactive skill like exchanging greeting and thanks and apologies, to express his needs, and to request information and services (Brown & Yule, 2000).

Through speaking, everyone can express their minds, ideas and thought freely and spontaneously. However, to communicate in target language is not easy, especially if students have little understanding about linguistic competence of the target language, lack of vocabulary and confidence which make them tend to be afraid of using the language. As stated by Harmer (2007), students are often reluctant to speak with their classmates because they are shy especially when a teacher asks them to give personal opinions.

Unfortunately, these phenomena also happened in BP2IP students who are still hard to use English in communication. Based on preliminary study, the writer found that the students had lack of confidence in using English due to their limited vocabulary. Many of them lacked of the necessary vocabulary while they were speaking, and consequently, they could not keep the interaction going. The students also stated that they did not have enough time to practice English. They learned English in the class only for a couple of time, and they had limited time to practice English outside the class which made them difficult to use English. As stated by Hetrakul (1995), students use English more frequently only inside the class and less frequent outside the class. Moreover, Bygate (1987, p. 3) points out that "one of the basic problems in foreign language teaching is to prepare learners to be able to use the language". Therefore, teachers need to be creative in designing the classroom's activities which

can provide students with a chance to practice and use English. Furthermore, it is necessary for teachers to examine factors, conditions and components that underlie speaking effectiveness. One of them is the strategy used in teaching process or also called teaching strategy.

Teaching strategy means various methods or ways that are implemented by teachers in teaching-learning process. Strategies in teaching is very important since they determine teachers' success in achieving teaching goals. As stated by William and Burden (2003), strategies used by teachers are the factor of success or failure in language learning for it is ultimately the strategies that determine what language instructions are and how they are conducted. Reiser and Dick (1996) contend that teachers can use different strategies of teaching to achieve teaching-learning goals and objectives. These imply that it is teachers' responsibility to make students speak English by employing suitable teaching strategies of speaking.

In short, it can be said that strategies are very important since they determine the success of teaching-learning process. Therefore, in this research the writers wanted to find out the teachers' strategies in teaching English (speaking) for cadets at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh.

### **Research Questions**

1. What strategies were used by the teachers in teaching speaking to cadets at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh?
2. What were the problems faced by the teachers in teaching speaking to cadets at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh?
3. What were the students' responses toward the teachers' strategies used in teaching English at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh?

### **Research Objectives**

1. to find out the strategies used by teachers in teaching speaking to cadets at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh.
2. to find out the problems faced by the teachers in teaching speaking to cadets at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh.
3. to find out the students' responses toward the teachers' strategy used in teaching English at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teaching Speaking**

Speaking is an oral communication carried out by someone with other persons to say something. It is a key for communication among people in daily life in order to change the information. As stated by Brown (2001), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Furthermore, Nunan (1995) points that learning to speak in a second language will be facilitated when learners are actively engaged in attempting to communicate. Summers (2003) says that speaking is to say something that expresses your ideas or opinions, or used when expressing an idea that you think it is exactly true. Moreover, Valette (1983) states that at functional level, speaking is making oneself understood. Furthermore, Chaney says that speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts (Chaney, 1998, p. 13).

The purpose of teaching speaking is to improve the oral production of the students. Richards and Renandya (2005) say that since the goal of language teaching is to provide learners with the communicative competence, classroom activities seem to be an important component of a language course. Therefore, the teacher should consider some aspects in designing and administering such activities which can make the students easier to learn.

In the process of learning speaking, one should know the aspects or components of speaking itself. There are five speaking skills including pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary and comprehension (Wipf, 1998; Syakur, 2000). Richards, Platt and Weber (1985, p. 54) say that "Comprehension is the process by which a person understands the meaning of written or spoken language". In the other words, comprehension is the understanding of a language as a means of communication when two or more people speak to each other. Students should also have the ability to manipulate structure and to use appropriate grammatical form in communication (Heaton, 2004). Furthermore, Hetrakul (1995, p.76) states that vocabulary is a component in speaking. Pronunciation is also an important aspect in speaking skill. It emphasizes more about how the sounds of speaker were caught by listeners (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985). Fluency is the ability to speak a language smoothly, effectively, and easily.

### **Teaching Strategies**

Teaching strategies are ways of making decisions about a course, an individual class, or even an entire curriculum, beginning with an analysis of the learners' characteristics, learning objectives, and instructional preferences of the teachers (MIT, 2002). Thus, it can be said that teaching strategies are how teachers treat students in teaching learning process. It is hoped that the goal of teaching can be achieved by using this strategy. In the case for teaching speaking, strategies should make students able to communicate efficiently and effectively. Richards and Renandya (2005) say that since a goal of language teaching is to provide learners with communicative competence, classroom activities that develop learners' ability to express themselves through speech will, therefore, seem to be an important component of a language course, and teachers who design and administer such activities will then be more important. In short, teaching strategies are very important since they determine the success of teaching process. Strategies used by teachers should be interesting and can capture students' attention.

Some of the strategies used in teaching speaking are such cooperative activities as role-play, creative tasks, and drilling (Anjaniputra, 2013). Moreover, for young learners' classrooms, there are some common strategies that can be used such as songs, poems, chants, drama, stories, games and Total Physical Response (TPR) activities. All these activities can affect learners and enhance their learning the language (Khameis, 2007).

### **Role Play/ Simulation**

Role play technique is an excellent activity for speaking in a relatively safe environment of the classroom (Nunan, 2003). Cameron (2001) states that role play is a learning activity that should be appropriate for students and social culture experience because the activity should give learners opportunities to use language they know and should start with simple dialogues before moving on to more advanced interactions. According to Shi (2006), Role play is an appropriate method to get students to imagine they are someone else and play that part. Students pretend to be another person who involve in a particular situation. Furthermore, role play is any speaking activities in which when one acts as someone else, he/she has to put themselves into an imaginary occasion (Budden, 2006).

## **Drilling**

Drilling is a way of standardizing pronunciation of a language item and developing fluidity (the ability to introduce language quickly and easily) (Houston, 2013). Harmer (2007) also points that drilling is mechanical ways in getting students to demonstrate and practice their ability to use specific language item in a controlled manner. Furthermore, Budden (2013) states that a drill is a classroom technique used to practice new language. It involves teachers in modeling a word or a sentence and learners in repeating it.

According to Thornbury (2005), drilling has some advantages including: allowing students to pay attention to new materials presented by teachers, emphasizing words, phrases, or utterances on students' mind, moving new items from working memory to long term memory, and providing a means of gaining articulator control over language.

## **Games**

A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun (Hadfield, 1998). Khameis (2007) mentions that games are good teaching tools that can be used to develop students' language learning and practice communication. Furthermore, Klippel (1994, p. 32) says that guessing games are true communicative situation and such are very important to practice foreign language with fun and excitement. Stephen (1993, p. 244) states that, "real guessing games provide the students with much practice in formalizing questions, an essential skill that does not always receive sufficient attention." Moreover, Patricia (1998) says that guessing games can be used to develop or reinforce concept, to add diversion to regular activities, or just to break the ice. In the other words, this game is interesting for students to be used for learning which also motivate them to practice with fun.

## **Picture Describing**

A picture is worth a thousand words, and this is particularly true for teaching English as a second language. There are four reasons why pictures are good to be used in teaching. First, pictures provide shared experience for students in a classroom. Second, they provide common grammatical aspects students can use and practice in the classroom. Third, pictures may result in the task variations in speaking. Fourth, they are also interesting for learners (Raimes, 1983). Moreover, by using pictures, students can focus on the picture to get the idea (Arsyad, 2005, p. 128) and it also gives motivation to students to use their ability

(Wright, 1989, p. 17). Furthermore, Harmer (2007, p. 42) also states that when students tell or describe the picture, they can easily construct the story. In short, it can be concluded that using describing picture strategies can help students in developing their speaking skill. It also motivates students in learning process.

### **Discussion Group**

Discussion is an excellent tool for developing students' reasoning skills because it gives them access to their thought processes and an opportunity to guide students to a higher level of thinking (Ozer, 2005). Kelly and Stafford (1993) say that a small discussion group can be an effective learning situation in which students learn both through instructions from their teachers and from interaction with each other. The group also provides opportunities for individuals to speak in front of others and to receive feedback from teachers and peers. Oradee (2012) states that communicative activities such as discussion can be effectively used in the language classroom.

According to Ozer (2005), there are some advantages of using discussion group for students' learning. First, it can increase students' comfort with the specialized language and methods of a field. Second, it develops critical thinking. Third, it also helps students to develop problem-solving skills. Hollander (2002) says using picture can reduce the students' shyness, nervousness and inhibition, stimulate a new way of thinking, and expand the students' knowledge, understanding of their strength and weakness.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research was a qualitative research focusing on strategies used in the classroom. Qualitative research is descriptive. It uses the natural setting as the direct source of data (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). The study was intended to find out the existing phenomena or natural setting of the implementation of strategies in teaching speaking for cadets at BP2IP Malahayati Aceh, which involved two English teachers and two classes of 58 cadets/students. Meanwhile, the instruments were classroom observation, interview, and questionnaire. Observation and interview were focused on the teacher in order to know speaking teaching strategies used in the class, while questionnaire was administered to students to recognize their responses towards the teachers' strategies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Strategies Used by the Teachers in Teaching Speaking for Cadets

Based on four observations done before, there were some strategies found by the writers used by the teachers of BP2IP Malahayati Aceh in teaching speaking as stated in the following table below:

**Table 1. Recapitulation of the Use of Strategies in Teaching Speaking**

No .	Teaching Strategies of Speaking	1 <sup>st</sup> observation N IIB	2 <sup>nd</sup> observation N II A	3 <sup>rd</sup> observation N II B	4 <sup>th</sup> observation N II A
1.	Role plays and Simulations	✓			
2.	Drilling	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	Games			✓	
4.	Describing Picture		✓		
5.	Discussion group				✓

Role play can be used for practicing speaking in comfortable situation of the classroom (Nunan, 2003). Moreover, Cameron (2001) stated that by using role play activity, students can have good opportunities to practice language in a real situation which can be started by simple task to higher interactions. Meanwhile, drilling is a good way to teach a standard pronunciation of English words which can make students learn it easily (Houston, 2013). Budden (2013) also says that a drill is a classroom technique used to practice new language.

Games are also the strategy which can be used to make students practice the language through a simple and interesting activity. Chandra (2008) points that games can improve students' interests and motivation in studying English, which can in turn improve their ability in speaking. Meanwhile, describing picture can be a strategy to help students in learning. Hendrickson (1990) contends that using pictures can motivate students in learning and also bring a different situation in teaching and



learning activity. Moreover, discussion group can give good contribution for students' learning. As stated by Kelly and Stafford (1993), small discussion group can provide a warm learning activity where students can easily learn through instructions from their teachers and from interaction with their friends.

Shortly, those strategies are believed to help students in learning. It can also reduce students' anxiety and fear in learning since they can have fun and enjoy in their learning. Furthermore, those strategies can motivate them to learn more about speaking.

### **Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching Speaking at BP2IP**

Based on the classroom observations and teachers' interview, the writers found that the teachers faced some obstacles in teaching speaking, motivating them to work hard to deal with such problems. The first common problem found in the classroom was vocabulary. Most of the cadets had limited number of vocabulary so that they felt hard to tell or share the idea. It means that having limited vocabulary made cadets feel hard to communicate in English and made the teachers difficult to teach. If the students had lack of vocabulary, they could not communicate their ideas as clearly as they desired and they could not grasp the ideas transmitted to them. At the same time, the teachers could not teach them well and the teaching goals could not be achieved. Regarding to this, Lin (2002) states that vocabulary is a main key of all language skills. This is also supported by Hetrakul (1995) who points out that vocabulary is a component in speaking where students need to master well.

Pronunciation was also a problem that the teachers found in teaching speaking for cadets. Many cadets had difficulties in pronouncing words. They felt difficult to pronounce certain words because in English, the spellings of the words are sometimes different from their pronunciations. Therefore, they find it hard to pronounce words correctly. In this case, Hetrakul (1995) points that the problem commonly faced by students is pronunciation.

The next problem found by the teachers was confidence. Many cadets felt less confidence in learning, forcing them to avoid speaking English in the classroom. In the learning process, the cadets also felt shy and had less confidence to speak. They were afraid of making mistakes which caused them to have low participation in speaking English. Nunan (1995) contends that students who lack of confidence about themselves and their English necessarily suffer from communication apprehension. The main cause of students' low confidence is their low ability in

speaking English (He & Chen, 2010) and lack of encouragement from teachers (Brown, 2001).

To deal with vocabulary and pronunciation problems in the classroom, the teachers did some activities. The teachers asked the cadets to have a notebook to write at least about three 'daily vocabulary' every day. From that vocabulary, the teachers asked them to make sentences or short conversation and asked them to practice and repeat it at dormitory. Moreover, the teachers always motivated and reminded them as not to be afraid of making mistakes during learning process (Macmillan, 1973).

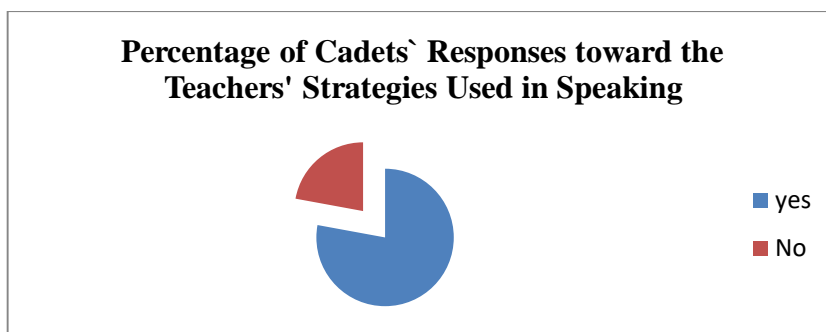
Furthermore, the teachers also applied some strategies in the classroom in order to cope with the problems. Some of them are playing games, using picture, group presentation, role plays, repeating task (drilling), and so on. Games can be used to provide a new context for rapid and enjoyable repetition in many key language areas (Byrne, 1997). Chen (2005) says that by games, students have an opportunity to use language after learning and practicing new vocabulary. Moreover, visual image (picture) is very useful aid for learning second language vocabulary (Oxford and Crookall, 1990). Doing role-play activities is a way to practice or rehearse situations that may happen in real life. The purpose of this is to prepare students for the real-life language use (Gu, 1998).

### **Students' Responses toward the Teaching Strategies in Speaking Classroom**

Generally, the students (cadets) at BP2IP Malahayati had quite the same responses toward the strategies used in the classroom based on the result of the questionnaires. Most cadets liked studying English, especially speaking because they believed that they had to know and understand English if they wanted to work on a professional merchant ship since English is used as a standard language of communication on board. Furthermore, most of them admitted that learning speaking was not easy since it is not their mother tongue. Therefore, they also found some obstacles during learning process such as lack of vocabulary, difficulty to pronounce English words, and afraid of making mistakes (less of confidence).

In addition, almost all cadets stated that they were pleased to learn speaking by strategies used by the teachers. They agreed that teachers' strategies in the classroom helped them to be brave and easy in speaking. These strategies also motivated them in learning. In short, it can be said

that they have a positive response toward the strategies used by the teachers in teaching speaking.



**Chart 1. The Percentages of Students' Responses toward Teachers' Strategies**

It can be seen that cadets mostly (77.5%) liked studying with the strategies used by the teachers in teaching speaking. Most of them agreed that those strategies helped them to reduce their anxiety in learning since they could share together with their friends in various ways.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings and discussion, some conclusions can be drawn as the following:

1. Limited vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation of English words, and less confidence were common obstacles found by the teachers during teaching process, which made them give extra effort in order to encourage their students.
2. Among many teaching strategies, there were five strategies used by the teachers in teaching speaking for cadets in BP2IP Malahayati Aceh, namely: Role Play, Drilling, Games, Describing Picture, and Discussion Group.
3. Many cadets of BP2IP Malahayati Aceh (around 77%) gave a positive response toward the strategies used by the teachers in teaching speaking. They agreed that teachers' strategies in the classroom motivated and helped them to learn and practice speaking.

In addition, due to the importance of strategies used in teaching, it is suggested to English teachers to apply various strategies in teaching to

make students able to learn easily. An appropriate strategy is not only effective in improving and motivating students in speaking, but also will help teachers to achieve teaching goals. Furthermore, teachers should also be creative to prepare and choose materials for teaching, to be wise to group students, to be careful to select students to answer the question, and to be sensible to allocate the time and so on. Moreover, to the next researchers who are interested in conducting a research on teaching strategies, it is suggested that they carry out research on other language skills, for instance reading, listening and writing.

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